

**Space Family Education, Inc.  
Board of Director's Open Meeting**

**August 17, 2006**

***Safety Report***

**Director & Vice President**

***Monthly Incident Report:*** Nothing to report this month. Debbie Berdich (VP) will resume monthly reports at next board meeting.

***Safety and Health Plan:*** Per stipulations of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), SFEI must provide a safety and health plan to the Safety & Mission Assurance Directorate within 60 days from the signing of the MOU (by mid-August). The plan was provided to Rene Hasson (NASA liason). The board is awaiting feedback, any additional comments/changes.

***Safety Announcement:*** The Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends children remove bike helmets when not riding bikes. Helmets should not be worn on playground equipment. 2 strangulation deaths reported. Tammy Gafka (Secretary) will send safety notice to membership.

***Director Report***

**Staffing**

Summer camp is over and all staff has returned to the center.

**Resignations**

Teresa A's (Room 1) re-location status is still uncertain but resignation is not eminent.

**New Hires**

None

**Other**

No report

## **Operations**

### **Facility**

***Safety Write-Up:*** Acting on an anonymous tip, a state inspector was called in to investigate incidences of reptiles and chickens brought to the center. State regulations prohibit bringing these animals into a daycare environment due to the concern of spreading disease. Indeed, baby chicks and snakes have been brought to the center for various occasions (rodeo week, snake awareness). The center was written up for these violations. The inspector was asked if the turtle in the Kindergarten room was allowed since the kids don't touch it. The inspector indicated that this is permissible. Kristy Hirning (Director) took the action to verify specific situations in which having restricted animals at the center is ok.

***Maintenance:*** Kristy will be scheduling the replacement of the cyberflex playground padding in the near future.

Kristy is working with NASA to get help replacing mulch and repairing fencing. As mentioned at Open House, Kristy is also looking for parent volunteers to help with various improvement projects at the center. A comment was made that no dates were put on the sign-up sheets for the various projects. Kristy said that she would work around parent availability. Dates are not critical. Kristy will add a note indicating this to the sign-up sheets for the projects.

### **Special Events**

***Summer Camp:*** An agreement is pending between SFEI and the Clear Lake Recreation Center to host summer camp for Summer 2007. The new facility includes a pool, air-conditioned gym, several rooms and an eating area. Based on facility leasing costs, budget planning including determination of tuition costs is in work.

***Open House:*** Open house was held on August 15, 2006. Open house consisted of a 40-minute overview of general JSC CCC policies, procedures and information that was led by Kristy. Parents were then invited to meet the teachers in their respective rooms to discuss specific class rules and objectives. Members commented that they liked this 2-part format and that they appreciated all the good information that was relayed. Some members commented that they did not have time to visit all rooms/teachers if they had more than one child enrolled in either rooms 1-4 or 5-9. Some members commented that there wasn't enough advance notice about Open House to arrange for child care so they could attend. In addition, members suggested a better description/schedule of the Open House program should be provided so parents could plan how to spend their time while at Open House.

### **Other**

None.

## ***Committees Report***

### **Education Curriculum**

No report

### **Fundraising**

Jennifer Mason (Fundraising Committee Chairperson) is tentatively scheduling a meeting for fundraising committee on August 31, 2006. Committee members will be notified via email.

Jennifer asked for feedback on the letter she emailed to Kristy and Melanie Saunders (President) that parents could submit to their respective, non-NASA companies to request donations for SFEI. Private companies/contractors have donated to the center in the past.

As a stipulation of the MOU, SFEI may not perform any fundraising during CFC open season, early October through mid-December for 2006. SFEI has had a long-standing, successful cookie dough fundraiser just prior to the holiday season. In the past, this has not conflicted with the CFC blackout period. SFEI planned to sell cookie dough for 2 weeks starting October 2 for delivery in November. Melanie requested that Rene verify that this would be ok with NASA. If not, SFEI will change the dates for the cookie dough sales.

### **Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)**

Liana Rodriggs (Policies and Procedures Board Member) reported that the SOP Committee has resumed activity. The committee has gone half way through the list of potential policy/procedure changes to determine whether or not they are clarifications of existing policies or new procedures. All new procedures will be brought to the board to determine which ones should be implemented. The committee will report these proposed policy changes to the board within the next few weeks.

### **Newsletter and Webpage**

The webpage needs to be updated with new tuition rates, teacher assignments and room pages.

The new license and MOU between NASA and SFEI has been posted (without the survey attachment, which can be provided upon request).

### **Room-1**

No report

### **Room-2**

No report

### **Room-3**

No report

### **Room-4**

No report

**Room-5**

No report

**Room-6**

No report

**Room-7**

No report

**Room-8**

No report

**Room-9**

No report

***Board Members Report***

**Policies and Procedures** (Liana Rodriggs)

***Migration:*** 2006 migration is finished!! The school is full except for Kindergarten. 12 students are currently enrolled in Kindergarten (target is 17). Jennifer Mason helped to publicize the Kindergarten vacancies to off-site contractors including USA, Boeing, SpaceHab and Wyle. It is unclear how widespread the distribution was for those announcements (depends on specific advertising restrictions, available forums, etc.). One member commented that JSC Today (which has periodic notices about Kindergarten openings) is posted to the ESCG website.

The waiting list was updated on August 1. There are 173 children on the waiting list including a lot of new infants with siblings enrolled.

Liana commented that, per the stipulations of the new MOU, JSC Exchange (Starport) employees, who are federal employees, have 2<sup>nd</sup> priority after NASA civil servants (before Contractors). Liana said she does not know if any Exchange employees are on the waiting list but she will verify and, if so, adjust their priority. Liana also commented that the Exchange employees may not know that the daycare is an option for them so this needs to be publicized.

**Treasurer** (Miranda Scroggins)

***Budget Report:*** Miranda has not yet received July budget report from SFEI staff. As of the last budget report, SFEI had ~\$50k in cash reserves. The inability to fill the Kindergarten vacancies results in a significant loss of revenue for the center and efforts should continue to try to fill those vacancies even though the school year has begun.

**Secretary** (Tammy Gafka)

***MOU:*** On June 14, 2006, the license and MOU establishing the relationship and associated duties between SFEI and NASA was signed. The license and MOU are effective for 5 years from the date of signing and have been posted to the JSC CCC website.

***Membership Dues:*** Normally the request for annual membership dues goes out August 1<sup>st</sup> for payment by September 1<sup>st</sup>. However, due to all the activity that occurs in the July/August time frame associated with the start of the school year, the consolidated SFEI member list has not been finalized by SFEI staff. Tammy asked Miranda if delaying the memo and associated payments by 1 month would affect the overall budget. Miranda commented that it would not. However, Louis Nguyen (out-going Secretary) recommended that the memo be sent to the current list ASAP and a separate notice be sent to new members when the updated list is complete. Tammy agreed with Louis' recommendation and will send a memo out to the current list in the next week.

**Vice President** (Debbie Berdich)

Debbie has been working with the outgoing SFEI vice president, Susan Gomez, to transition all activities. Several activities are in work. No conclusions to report today.

**President** (Melanie Saunders)

Nothing to report. Melanie kicked off the discussion of the proposal to eliminate Kindergarten at JSC CCC.

***SFEI Members Report***

**Discussion of Proposal to Eliminate Kindergarten at JSC CCC**

The discussion was kicked off by Melanie who stated the issue to be addressed was whether it would be more beneficial to the general SFEI membership if Kindergarten were eliminated in favor of reallocating the space across the younger age groups. The reallocation would result in smaller age ranges in each room and, due to the high demand for daycare for younger children, the assurance that all room vacancies would be filled.

Melanie stated that despite reasonable efforts, including advertisements in JSC today, child accelerations and word of mouth, this school year SFEI was unable to fill the Kindergarten room. There are currently 17 spots available and only 12 students enrolled. The lack of revenue as a result of not operating Kindergarten at capacity is significant. Some of this revenue was regained by increasing the head counts, within state guidelines, in some of the younger rooms. However, due to the fixed operating costs, SFEI's healthiest financial position is to have all rooms full. Ultimately, the cost of operating below capacity is passed on to all members.

Melanie requested that the discussion focus on whether there is a demand for Kindergarten, today and in the future, not the quality of the Kindergarten program. She reiterated that the quality of the program is not in dispute. Is the inability to fill Kindergarten a fluke this year? Is the demand cyclical based on whether potential students have older or younger siblings? Melanie noted that if the demand appears to be consistently low, the board has an obligation to assess how the limited space at JSC CCC is allocated to best meet the needs of the general membership.

Melanie went on to discuss the various reasons why some members and staff felt Kindergarten should be retained, such as: maintaining the caliber of education at the daycare,

members wanting to have an additional year to keep siblings at the same location, JSC CCC Kindergarten is much better than public school, etc. Melanie also mentioned some of the reasons why members chose not to use Kindergarten like they are already paying for public school and could use the tuition money for other family expenses and they wanted to keep children together with older siblings. Despite the various personal reasons why members felt retaining Kindergarten or not was important, Melanie stated that the issue should be studied from the perspective of the membership at large, not specific situations. She stated that if the members are truly divided, the board will put the issue up to membership vote.

Melanie noted the board's goal of making a decision on whether to retain Kindergarten for the 2007-2008 school year by September 2006. But, she also noted that the board will not be forced into making a hasty decision without all the relevant data. If it appears that the board needs more time then the decision will be postponed a year so the data and trends can be further studied. She noted that change is expensive and the board is certainly not taking this issue lightly. Finally, to conclude her opening remarks, Melanie noted that the board planned to use today's meeting to listen to the members concerns and suggestions and not debate the issue.

Following Melanie's opening remarks, Amy Elison (member) gave a presentation which included the consolidated inputs of a number of members in support of retaining Kindergarten. Along with the presentation, Amy provided several letters from past and current members expressing the value of retaining the Kindergarten program at JSC CCC. The presentation and letters will be available, along with these minutes on the JSC CCC website.

Amy cited several negative impacts to eliminating Kindergarten including the late notice to current members who would have to make new plans for their children, the cost to reconfigure rooms and redistribute staff, and the small reduction in the wait list versus the big impact of eliminating a high performing Kindergarten program.

Amy offered several near term solutions to fill the Kindergarten classes such as requiring Kindergarten commitments no later than 1 year in advance, establishing a focus group to obtain firm commitments on Kindergarten openings, expanding Kindergarten eligibility to NASA and Contractor grandchildren and involving off-site contractor HR programs to get full distribution of notices of Kindergarten vacancies. Finally, Amy also stressed the importance of establishing a long-term steering committee to guide the direction of the daycare as opposed to relying on term-limited board members (refer to Amy's presentation for comprehensive summary).

As a result of the discussion, the board agreed to poll the general membership (not just those in Pre-K or Early Pre-K) on the issue to get a reading from the overall membership. It was noted that the content and the wording of the poll needs to be carefully considered. To accompany the poll, the board will prepare an information sheet with the objective data related to the issue so the membership is fully-informed before making their choices. The poll will be conducted within the next month.

*Note: The Kindergarten discussion was a free-flowing discussion in which several people including general members, staff and board members made various comments and counter comments throughout the meeting. It was impractical to record all discussions. These minutes do not give a comprehensive summary of all points made.*

**Attendance:**

***BOD:***

Tammy Gafka, Liana Rodriggs, Debbie Berdich, Melanie Saunders, Miranda Scroggins

***SFEI Staff:***

Kristy Hirning, Ricky Reynolds, Lois Ward

***NASA Liason:***

Rene Hasson

***Members:***

Amy Elison, Lisa Swanson, Dan Raab, Terry Canada, Tom Marshburn, Tim Lee, Jane Gensler, Patricia Estes, Linda Loerch, Louis Nguyen, Susan Gomez, Camina Mortillero, Helen Harris, Jennifer Lewis, Jennifer Mason, Jeremy Jacobs, Jennifer Madsen

The next meeting is scheduled for September 21, 2006  
Building 111 Conference Room - 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM